



2010

Hickory Highlights

*Planning for the Future
Grants*

● *Transportation*

● *Economic Development*

● *Serving the Community*



Planning for the Future



Construction at the NEWWTP in December.

- Public Utilities began construction on the new Northeast Waste Water Treatment Plant this summer, and it is expected to be complete by spring of 2012. The existing facility is more than 40 years old.
- City Council and staff held community workshops on future planning and aquatics, with all recommendations going to respective advisory boards.
- The Parks and Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment Plan was completed in May. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is 13 years old, and a detailed analysis of all parks and recreation facilities was needed. The needs assessment, performed by a professional firm that specializes in parks and recreation park master planning/construction services, provided the City with a thorough and candid evaluation of facilities that needed to be expanded, improved, consolidated, or closed. The study also developed and established standards for park and recreation facility development in Hickory.
- Hickory by Choice 2030 (HBC 2030) is the City's long range planning document which guides city leaders when development projects are considered and prioritized. Beginning in early 2011, it will guide the City through 2030. It replaces the original 1999 Hickory by Choice. This new plan includes discussion about housing, the environment, economic development and recreation in addition to the traditional land use and transportation topics.
- HBC 2030 discusses the need to support redevelopment in existing commercial areas that have experienced decline. And similarly, HBC 2030 encourages development to occur in existing urban areas of Hickory, and it discourages sprawl on the edges of the City.
- The Land Development Code (LDC) was also updated through the same process. This LDC includes the zoning laws that govern the City. Some features of the LDC that are helpful to citizens include:
 - The LDC is shorter, easier to read, has more illustrations, graphics and uses a more simplified land use table for determining which uses can go in the various zoning districts.
 - The laws governing signs are easier to follow and ensure that signs are effective without being too large or distracting.
 - The new LDC makes it easier to redevelop property in Hickory because the rules are not as difficult for areas that have already been developed previously.
- The purpose of updating HBC 2030 and the LDC is to ensure that the plan and code reflect the current economic times, make it easier to develop in Hickory, and protect neighborhoods from badly designed commercial development.

Transportation

- The Clement Boulevard, NW extension project that connects Old Lenoir Road and U.S. 321 was completed in December.
- The new Greenway Transportation transit center opened in Downtown Hickory this summer.
- North Carolina Department of Transportation completed the Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard road project in April, and City crews completed landscaping, and lighting Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard in November.
- In just a year, crews constructed more than a mile of new sidewalk, resurfaced approximately 8.5 lane miles of streets, and repaired 250 pot holes.



- Crews replaced 878 street name signs in Hickory due to new federal regulations that require larger and brighter lettering on signs, and the City will continue replacing street name signs until all are replaced.

The new street names signs are easier to read, especially at night.



Crews planting new shrubs on Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard in November.

Economic Development

- Turbotec Products, Inc., an international supplier of heat exchangers and heat transfer products for heater, refrigeration and geothermal markets, purchased a 100,000 square foot facility in the City of Hickory's Fairgrove Business Park, and plans to make a \$6.5 million investment over the next three years and hire an additional 73 people.
- Hickory City Council awarded eight Vacant Building Revitalization Grants totaling \$152,796 leveraging \$420,055 in private investments within a distressed part of the City.
- In February, Hickory City Council appointed the Business Development Committee (BDC), made up of seven members representing key business sectors and areas of expertise of the City. The Committee's mission is to support economic development for increased employment in Hickory, and identify and assess ideas and apply capabilities and resources available in the community.
- The BDC identified a strong community brand and relocation marketing as its top priority. Upon recommendation of the Committee, Hickory City Council hired a premier research and marketing firm that specializes in working with cities across the nation to conduct thorough research, marketing and branding strategies which will enable the community to move forward with bringing people and businesses to Hickory. The project is expected to be complete by the summer of 2011.
- This marked the 16th consecutive year without a property tax increase.
- While cities across the state and nation are in a financial crisis, Hickory maintains a balanced budget with funds set aside for essential projects and emergencies.



Councilman Danny Seaver, Councilwoman Jill Patton, U.S. Senator Richard Burr, and Mayor Rudy Wright met with Sen. Burr during the National League of Cities meeting in March. City Council has a federal and state legislative agenda for each year, with this year's top priority being economic development.

Grants



CNG street sweeper.

- Hickory streets are greener and cleaner thanks to an \$80,000 grant from the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources to purchase a compressed natural gas (CNG) street sweeper.
- Fourteen City buildings were upgraded with new and energy efficient lighting due to a \$209,300 grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The new lighting is expected to reduce energy costs by 30 percent.
- The City received a \$2.5 million grant from EPA to upgrade the equipment and software that regulates the traffic signals in Hickory. This upgrade will allow the signals to be coordinated so that the timing is improved and cars can be detected with video to trigger signal changes. All of these changes work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from idling vehicles and manage traffic congestion more efficiently. The project will be nearing completion by late summer 2011.
- The City received a grant from Federal Aviation Administration to resurface 6,400 feet of airport taxiway that cost \$1.7 million. The FAA paid 95 percent of that cost, with North Carolina and the City each paying 2.5 percent.
- Contractors for the City completed the replacement of approximately 2.7 miles of the 100-year-old Cripple Creek sewer line. The project was completed in September and paid for with money from ARRA and the Clean Water Management Trust Fund.
- Hickory Police Department received more than \$210,000 in grants to pay for personnel, equipment, video in-car cameras, bullet proof vests, and more.
- The City received \$85,649 from ARRA to assist with the new Green Park Subdivision, which will provide affordable housing in a subdivision with plenty of open space.
- Nine buildings throughout the City used monies from the \$400,000 United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield Assessment Grant. The grant monies were used to do an inventory and subsequent prioritization of known and suspect Brownfield sites throughout the community.

Hickory Public Library

- Circulated 498,193 library materials, and 437,219 people visited the libraries.
- A total of 20,248 people attended one or more of the 828 library programs.
- Friends of Hickory Public Library donated \$15,000 toward a new conference room at the Patrick Beaver Memorial Library.



Parks & Recreation

- A total of 73,444 citizens dropped in at one of the recreation centers.
- Parks and Recreation staff put together 1,199 programs.
- A total of 2,323 citizens participated in youth and adult sports programs.
- City is thankful for its 378 volunteer coaches.
- The Unifour Senior Games had 690 participants, the most participants in the state.

Dwight Bartlett Midget League 2010 champs.

Fire & Police

- A total of 120 firefighters each received 141 hours of instruction while earning their Technical Rescue Certification through the North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission.
- Hickory Fire Department responded to 6,081 emergency calls, with 3,696 of them being medical calls.
- Hickory Fire educators and firefighters conducted 430 programs throughout the year and directly reached 34,247 people, and distributed 382 smoke alarms.
- Hickory Police Department dispatched 72,099 calls for services.
- Hickory Police officers made 195 presentations throughout the year to organizations, and directly reached 8,029 people. This number does not include police department tours and special displays.
- Hickory Police Code Enforcement Unit had 955 cases, 792 of them were nuisance call (junk vehicles, overgrown lots, and more) and 163 were housing cases (homes not meeting code).



Crews plowing during a winter storm.

Public Services

- Crews used more than 500 tons of road salt, 400 tons of sand, 15,000 gallons of salt brine, and plowed 9,000 lane miles during winter storms.
- Planted 1,133 shrubs, pruned 4,616 shrubs, and pruned 593 trees.
- Collected 22,845 tons of garbage.
- Collected 2,791 tons of aluminum, steel, glass and plastic materials, and 6,223 tons of yard waste was recycled into mulch and compost, and sold to the public.
- Provided 4.7 billion gallons of water to utility customers in a year, which averages 12.9 million gallons of water per day.

Citizens at Work

- The City appreciates its more than 200 citizens that lead neighborhood associations, and serve on various city boards, commissions, and teams that advise and aid Hickory City Council on projects and programs.
- Nine citizens completed the 13th Neighborhood College course in December. More than 260 citizens have completed the 10-week citizen course that is a series of professionally led sessions designed to teach citizens about the City of Hickory and the services it provides.

Neighborhood leaders with City Councilwoman Sally Fox.



Children enjoy a concert at the Ridgeview Branch Library.



Technical rescue training.